

1. That discussions on suitable topics of general ornithological interest shall take place at not more than three Meetings in any one Session of the B. O. C.
2. That one or two Members shall be officially appointed by the Committee to open a discussion.
3. That the Member or Members officially appointed to open a discussion shall be respectively limited to twenty minutes in which to address the Meeting; and that all subsequent speakers shall be restricted to a time-limit of ten minutes, subject to the discretion of the Chairman.
4. That any Member of the Club may propose a subject for discussion; but the Committee shall decide whether the subject proposed is a suitable one and at which Meeting it shall be discussed.
5. That a shorthand writer shall be engaged for the evenings on which discussions take place, and that he shall be paid at the rate of not more than £1 for each night.
6. That the discussions shall not be allowed to interfere unduly with the usual systematic business of the Club.

(Signed) WALTER ROTHSCHILD, *Chairman*.
 DAVID A. BANNERMAN, *Editor*.
 PERCY R. LOWE, *Hon. Sec.*

The Hon. WALTER ROTHSCHILD, F.R.S., read the following notes on the genus *Sula*:—

In the 'Novitates Zoologicæ,' vol. vi. p. 178 (1899), Dr. Hartert and I applied the name *Sula variegata* Tschudi to the "Masked Gannet" of the Galapagos Islands, and although I corrected this error in the 'Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club,' vol. xiii. p. 7 (1902-1903), the correction appears to have been completely overlooked. Mr. E. W. Gifford, Proc. Calif. Acad. ser. 4, vol. ii. p. 89 (1913), has again called the Galapagos "Masked Gannet"

(*Sula variegata*) "The Peruvian Gannet." Since the publication of my correction in 1902 the Tring Museum has received a most interesting series of adult and young examples of the true *Sula variegata* Tschudi, collected by Dr. H. O. Forbes on the Peruvian Guano Islands, and this has enabled me to form a definite opinion as to the true status of the Galapagos species. In connection with this question, I have gone into the synonymy and specific and racial position of the birds hitherto placed under the name *Sula cyanops* Sund., the Masked Gannet. I was considerably hampered in this work owing to the want of specimens from the two all-important regions:—the Atlantic Ocean and the Western Indian Ocean. The Tring Museum possesses large series from Laysan, Australia, the Islands in the Pacific, and California, but only a solitary bird from the Atlantic and none from the Red Sea or Indian Ocean. The British Museum series is extremely poor in specimens of so-called *Sula cyanops* Sund. from all localities, but fortunately contains one adult bird from the Atlantic (Ascension Island) and one adult and three young from the Indian Ocean (Assumption Island).

Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, in the 'Catalogue of Birds,' united all the "Masked Gannets," inclusive of *S. abbotti* Ridgw., under *S. cyanops*, while he considered the adult and three-year old bird of the Galapagos "Masked Gannet" to be the adult and three-year old stages of *Sula variegata*.

Mr. Grant, unlike Mr. Hume ('Stray Feathers,' vol. v. pp. 307-312), did not put much reliance on the coloration of the soft parts in the *S. cyanops* group; but in the light of recent collections and of the fact, now being realized, that sea-birds are much more restricted in their areas than was formerly supposed, the soft parts seem after all to form one of a series of good racial distinctions.

Before going into the details of the *cyanops* group I must clear up a vexed question of synonymy. Most authors when writing on the "Masked Gannets" employ the name *S. cyanops* Sund. and quote *S. dactylatra* Less. with a

query (?). Mr. Grant goes so far as to say that "the description of *S. dactylatra* given by Lesson is unrecognizable." This is, however, not the case, for although the description of the plumage, "pure white, wings and tail black," would apply approximately to three species occurring on or around Ascension Island (the type-locality of *S. dactylatra*), the possession of a "semicircular naked throat patch" excludes *S. capensis*, which narrows it down to two. The statement that the beak is horn-colour at once eliminates the red-billed *Sula piscatrix*, called by Lesson, on the same page, *S. erythrorhyncha*. Therefore the oldest name for the "Masked Gannet" of the Atlantic Ocean is *Sula dactylatra* Less., and this name must be used in the place of *S. cyanops* Sund.

Now, on going into the question of local races, I have been able to distinguish the following five forms, including a new subspecies :—

1. *SULA DACTYLATRA DACTYLATRA* Less.

Bill horny blue-grey, very slender ; feet and legs yellow.

Range. Ascension Island and S. Atlantic Coasts.

2. *SULA DACTYLATRA MELANOPS* Hartl.

Bill greenish-yellow, slender ; feet and legs slaty-blue to dull black.

Range. Western Indian Ocean (Red Sea and Islands north of Madagascar).

3. *SULA DACTYLATRA PERSONATA* Gould.

Bill yellow, very stout and large ; feet and legs greenish blue.

Range. Western Pacific.

4. *Sula dactylatra californica*, subsp. n.

Bill bright yellow, very thick ; feet and legs orange.

Range. Coasts of California and Central America.

Type in the Tring Museum : ♀ ad. San Benedicto Island, 7. xii. 01.

Obs. In addition to the colour of the soft parts this race

differs from *S. d. dactylatra* in having a much larger and stouter bill.

5. *SULA DACTYLATRA GRANTI* Rothsch.

Bill red ; feet bluish green.

Range. Galapagos Islands.

Type in the Tring Museum. Culpepper Island, Galapagos Group.

There is absolutely no other difference between the adult of *Sula dactylatra granti* and *S. dactylatra californica*, except that in *S. d. granti* the bill is red and the feet and legs bluish-green, while in *S. d. californica* the bill is yellow and the feet and legs orange.

The young birds of the first and second year are much alike in plumage in the four races of *S. dactylatra* in which they are known, but the young of *S. d. dactylatra* is not represented in collections.

The first plumage of *S. d. melanops* differs from that of the other subspecies in having the head, neck, and wings blackish-brown ; in *S. d. personata* and *S. d. californica* the head, neck, and wings are paler umber-brown ; and the young of *S. d. granti* is distinguished by the dull purplish-pink bill.

The true *Sula variegata* has never occurred on the Galapagos Islands, its breeding-grounds being exclusively the islands off the Peruvian coast.

The adult *S. variegata* has the head, neck, front half of the interscapulars, and under-surface pure white, the back, rump, and wings being grey-brown, the feathers edged with white.

The young bird has the head and neck yellowish-grey, the under-surface mottled-grey and whitish, and the rest of the plumage grey-brown, not so uniformly edged with white. The wing of *S. variegata* is also three inches shorter than that of the Galapagos "Masked Gannet."

The young of the Blue-footed Booby, *Sula nebouxi*, has occasionally been mixed up with that of *S. variegata* and

the *S. dactylatra* forms, but the brown-black head and neck and the lancet-shaped feathers on these parts render it easily distinguishable.

Sula abbotti is quite a distinct species with the entire wings deep black, the naked throat bright green, and the feet leaden grey.

The Hon. WALTER ROTHSCHILD also exhibited 17 varieties of the Common Partridge (*Perdix perdix*). Six of these were examples of a type of colour-variation common in Russia, having a pale sandy suffusion in place of the brown-grey. One example was of a silver-grey colour, owing to the almost complete elimination of brown pigment.

Two birds killed in Devonshire in 1860 exhibited a similar phase in the Partridge to that of "*Synoicus lodoisiæ*" found in the Quail and of Sabine's Snipe among the Common Snipe (which were exhibited for comparison, as well as *Gallinago huegeli* the representative phase in *G. aucklandica*).

Two examples were suffused with a sooty-black colour; these two specimens, from Tring, were examples of a strain of Partridge, now extinct, which had been killed in numbers on two farms near Tring for 10 years in succession.

Six skins represented specimens of the red phase in the so-called Mountain Partridge (*P. perdix* ab. *montana*). One was a complete, and two were almost complete examples of *P. montana*, while the other three were intermediate between *P. montana* and typical *P. perdix*.

MR. W. R. OGILVIE-GRANT exhibited some remarkable examples of the Red-legged and Common Partridges, showing strange variations in the colour of their plumage, and made the following remarks:—

"The exhibition of this series of abnormally coloured Partridges was suggested by the recent capture in Kent of a very remarkable Red-leg. It is a second example of the most extraordinary colour-variation known to occur in this species. The first example was killed near Braintree,